

INTEGRATED GENERATOR AND TRANSFORMER AND ASSOCIATED METHODS

Field of the Invention

[0001] The present invention relates to the field of power generation and, more particularly, to a power generating apparatus and related methods.

Background of the Invention

[0002] An electrical power generation apparatus may comprise an electrical generator that is driven by a turbine, for example. The electrical generator converts mechanical energy into electrical energy. A typical electrical generator includes a stator, and a rotor that rotates within the stator to generate electricity. The rotor is driven by a shaft to which it is mounted.

[0003] An isolated phase bus is commonly used to connect a step-up transformer to an electric generator. An example of such an isolated phase bus is disclosed in U.S. Patent No. 2,548,566 to Stafford, for example. The isolated phase bus comprises a plurality of bus bars in an enclosure. The isolated phase bus connects an electrical generator to a plurality of transformers and is mounted to a plurality of H-beam supports by support rings.

[0004] U.S. Patent No. 2,944,101 to Albright discloses a metal enclosed high voltage bus structure. The bus is suitable for supporting voltages of the order of 138 KV. The bus structure comprises flexible rolled sheet metal. To

provide rigidity sufficient for mounting to supports, circular reinforcing members are fastened to the outside of the housing.

[0005] A problem associated with the above referenced configurations, however, is that they may require a large footprint, which may increase design costs, as well as overall plant costs. Further, the isolated phase bus may be cumbersome. Once the isolated phase bus is installed, maneuverability about the site may be difficult.

[0006] A product distributed by ABB under the commercial name of Powerformer™ is a high voltage generator using solid dielectric high voltage cables for stator windings. The high voltage cables can be connected directly to a transmission system. More specifically, the Powerformer™ uses underground cable technology (with Class A insulation, as understood by those skilled in the art) for stator windings. Low insulation temperatures, however, generally correspond to large size and/or low efficiency operation. Further, the Powerformer™ is generally custom designed for a given transmission voltage.

Summary of the Invention

[0007] In view of the foregoing background, it is therefore an object of the present invention to provide a power generating apparatus that eliminates the need for an isolated phase bus and that occupies a smaller footprint on a power plant site.

[0008] These and other objects, features, and advantages of the present invention are provided by an electrical power generating apparatus that may comprise a housing, an electrical generator within the housing, and a turbine for driving the electrical generator. The electrical power generating apparatus may further comprise a step-up transformer within the housing and connected to the electrical generator. The electrical generator and the step-up transformer being within a housing is advantageous because it occupies a smaller footprint, and eliminates the need for an isolated phase bus.

[0009] The electrical power generating apparatus may comprise a plurality of insulated copper conductors connecting the electrical generator and the step-up transformer, and the electrical generator may have at least a 50-megawatt output. A barrier wall may be included within the housing and between the electrical generator and the step-up transformer. Further, the housing may comprise at least one access door. The electrical power generating apparatus may also comprise a fire extinguishing system within the housing.

[0010] The step-up transformer may have an output voltage of one of at least 69 KV. The turbine may comprise a gas turbine, a steam turbine, for example.

[0011] The electrical power generating apparatus may comprise an output between the electrical generator and the step-up transformer for providing station power. In other embodiments, the step-up transformer may comprise a station power tap for providing station power.

[0012] A method aspect of the present invention is for making an electrical power generating apparatus. The method may comprise positioning an electrical generator within a housing, and connecting a step-up transformer to the electrical generator within the housing. The step-up transformer may advantageously be connected to the electrical generator without use of an isolated phase bus.

Brief Description of the Drawings

[0013] FIG. 1 is schematic view of an electrical power generating apparatus according to the present invention.

[0014] FIG. 2 is a schematic view of another embodiment of the electrical power generating apparatus according to the present invention.

Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiments

[0015] The present invention will now be described more fully hereinafter with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which preferred

embodiments of the invention are shown. This invention may, however, be embodied in many different forms and should not be construed as limited to the embodiments set forth herein. Rather, these embodiments are provided so that this disclosure will be thorough and complete, and will fully convey the scope of the invention to those skilled in the art. Like numbers refer to like elements throughout, and prime notation is used to indicate similar elements in alternate embodiments.

[0016] Referring initially to FIG. 1, an electrical power generating apparatus **20** according to the present invention is now described. The electrical power generating apparatus **20** includes a housing **22**, and an electrical generator **24** within the housing. The housing **22** may, for example, be constructed of metal or concrete, for example, or another a similar durable material, as understood by those skilled in the art.

[0017] The electrical power generating apparatus **20** also includes a turbine **26** for driving the electrical generator **24**. The turbine **26** is illustratively positioned exterior the housing **22** and comprises a shaft **28** connected to the generator **24**. The turbine **26** may be a gas turbine, or a steam turbine, for example, as understood by those skilled in the art.

[0018] The electrical power generating apparatus **20** also illustratively comprises a step-up transformer **30** within the housing **22** and connected to the electrical generator **24**. A plurality of conductors **32** are used to connect the electrical generator **24** to the step-up transformer **30**. The conductors **32** are preferably insulated copper conductors, but may also another type of conductor suitable for connecting the electrical generator **24** to the step-up transformer **30**, as understood by those skilled in the art.

[0019] The electrical generator **24** preferably has at least a 50-megawatt output, but those skilled in the art will appreciate that the electrical generator may have an output of 200-megawatts, or greater. Various types of oils may be used in the step-up transformer **30**, some of which may be flammable. Accordingly, a barrier wall **38** may be included within the housing **22** and between the electrical generator **24** and the step-up transformer **30** to

isolate the step-up transformer in case of a fire. The barrier wall **38** may be made of metal or concrete, for example, or another type of material suitable for isolating the step-up generator **30** within the housing **22**. The housing **22** may also comprise at least one access door **34**. The access door **34** is preferably lockable to restrict access to the housing **22**.

[0020] The electrical power generating apparatus **20** also illustratively comprises a fire extinguishing system **40** within the housing **22**. The fire extinguishing system **40** may include a reservoir **42** connected to a supply line **44** having a plurality of discharge nozzles **46** connected thereto. The fire extinguishing system **40** is preferably installed along an upper portion of the interior of the housing **22** to be elevated above the electrical generator **24** and the step-up transformer **30**. Other configurations of the fire extinguishing system **40** are also contemplated by the present invention, however, as understood by those skilled in the art.

[0021] The step-up transformer **30** illustratively includes a transformer output **31**. The transformer output **31** may have an output voltage of one of 115 KV, 138 KV, 161 KV, and 230 KV to readily accommodate a range of voltages, as desired. More specifically, the transformer output **31** preferably has an output voltage of 69 KV or higher. The electrical power generating apparatus **20** illustratively includes a station power output **50** between the electrical generator **24** and the step-up transformer **30** for providing station power. The station power output **50** may be a plurality of conductors, for example, that are connected to the conductors **32** used to connect the electrical generator **24** to the step-up transformer **30**.

[0022] The electrical power generating apparatus **20** advantageously eliminates the need for an isolated phase bus to connect the electrical generator **24** and the step-up transformer **30**. Due to the elimination of the isolated phase bus, the footprint typically necessary for an electrical generator and step-up transformer is reduced. Furthermore, design time of a power plant is advantageously decreased, as well as design cost. Construction costs

associated with an isolated phase bus are advantageously eliminated, and the reduced footprint decreases general power plant costs.

[0023] Turning now additionally to FIG. 2, another embodiment of the electrical power generating apparatus **20'** is now described. In the second embodiment of the electrical power generating apparatus **20'**, the step-up transformer **30'** illustratively includes a station power tap **52'** for providing station power. The station power tap **52'** is provided by a plurality of conductors **54'** that are illustratively connected to a core **53'** within the step-up transformer **30'**, but may also be another type of tap suitable for providing station power, as understood by those skilled in the art. The other elements of the second embodiment of the power generating apparatus **20'** are similar to those of the first embodiment, are labeled with prime notation, and require no further discussion herein.

[0024] A method aspect of the present invention is for making an electrical power generating apparatus **20**. The method may comprise positioning an electrical generator **24** within a housing **22**, and connecting a step-up transformer **30** to the electrical generator within the housing. The step-up transformer **30** may advantageously be connected to the electrical generator **24** without use of an isolated phase bus.

[0025] Many modifications and other embodiments of the invention will come to the mind of one skilled in the art having the benefit of the teachings presented in the foregoing descriptions and the associated drawings. Therefore, it is understood that the invention is not to be limited to the specific embodiments disclosed, and that modifications and embodiments are intended to be included within the scope of the appended claims.